Key Recommendation: Increase Commitment to Public Transit

Overview

The northeastern Illinois region needs and deserves a world-class transit system. This requires attention to not only how transit operates, but how it is perceived. A system that functions well, with on-time and frequent service and seamless connections between modes, is a necessity. But so are features that make transit attractive, such as clean stations, modern transit vehicles, and clear information.

For many people today, transit is an option of last resort, due to concerns (whether real or perceived) about personal safety, delays, or infrequent service. Many others would like to use transit but lack access to service that meets their needs. Among the highest priorities of *GO TO 2040*, CMAP recommends making transit the preferred travel option for as many of the region's residents as possible.

The *GO TO 2040* plan describes how the region's transit system should be strengthened through the following recommended actions:

- Improve the fiscal health of transit by increasing investment levels and addressing cost increases.
- Improve the operations of the region's transit system, focusing investments on maintenance and modernization.
- Pursue a limited number of high-priority major capital projects.
- Conduct supportive land use planning and make small-scale infrastructure investments to make transit work better.

The continual financial issues facing the transit system have been caused by both insufficient funding and rapid increases in costs. Both of these need to be addressed to restore the transit system to fiscal health. A portion of revenue from new transportation funding sources, including implementing congestion pricing on some expressways and increasing the state gas tax, should be devoted to transit. The transit operators and the RTA also should make a concerted and unified effort to control costs and improve service efficiency.

Public transit should be improved through maintenance, modernization, and expansion (including high-speed rail). By steadily moving toward "a state of good repair" -- in which all facilities are maintained in good condition, with no backlog of capital maintenance -- the region can save more costly repairs and benefit from operational improvements, including increased reliability and comfort that contribute to riders' confidence in the system. Modernization of transit includes technological improvements that improve system performance but also those

that improve user perceptions of transit. Expansion of bus service into underserved areas, using the state-of-the-art technologies and operational concepts, is supported by *GO TO 2040*; these expansions should be carefully prioritized to ensure its success.

While maintenance, modernization, and strategic improvements are the main priorities of *GO TO 2040*, CMAP does recommend a limited number of major projects, including the West Loop Transportation Center, Red Line South extension, north Red Line improvements, and improvements to the Union Pacific rail lines, the Southwest Service, and the Rock Island line. For the most part, these projects improve existing infrastructure rather than add extensions or new services. The advent of high-speed rail prompts CMAP to recommend creation of the West Loop Transportation Center. A necessary project for our region to become the hub of a Midwest high-speed rail network, it also will have significant immediate benefits to Metra service and will improve connections between Metra and CTA. Recommended capital improvements also include managed lanes on the I-90, I-290, and I-55 expressways that may include Bus Rapid Transit (BRT).

Land use planning and small-scale infrastructure improvements to support transit are critical, and often make the difference in the success of transit service. CMAP supports transit oriented development (TOD), and seeks to broaden the definition of transit-supportive land use beyond areas around train stations; in considering transit-supportive land use, *GO TO 2040* includes support for bus service as well as rail. The plan recommends the development of funding and incentive programs to support transit-supportive local planning.

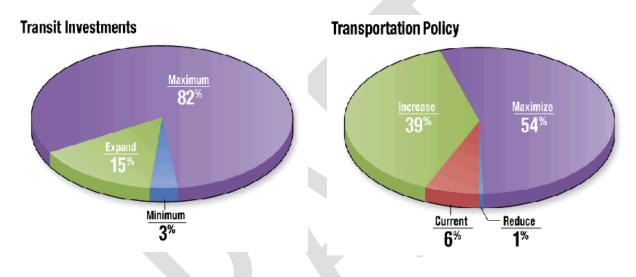
Significant new funding is necessary to make the proposed transit improvements. The many benefits of a strong transit system include:

- Reduced congestion, improving travel times both for people who use transit and for those who drive.
- A high return on public investment through simple maintenance of the current transit system, and an even higher return when increased investment is tied to land use policies that encourage transit use.
- Lower household transportation costs compared to automobiles, providing important travel options for lower-income residents.
- Reduced emissions of pollutants and greenhouse gases through decreased energy consumption.
- Increased value of land, helping to support transit-oriented development or reinvestment projects.

The following section describes benefits, defines current conditions, explains the importance of investing in transit, and provides details about the recommended actions, including costs and financing.

Benefits of Public Transit

Public transit is identified as an important part of the transportation system in the *GO TO 2040 Regional Vision*, which calls for a "broad range of integrated and seamless transportation choices that are safe, accessible, easy to navigate, affordable, and coordinated with nearby land use." Strong public support for transit was expressed during the engagement activities that CMAP conducted during summer 2009. Over three-fourths of workshop and on-line participants favored maximizing our investment in transit, and many emphasized the importance of transit in their comments. In communities that already had transit coverage, participants wanted to preserve their existing service and improve it; in communities with limited transit service, there was strong support for expanding transit to include new areas.



A strong transit system provides many benefits to the region, including economic, environmental, and community benefits.

Economic Benefits

In a 2007 report on public transit's impact on the economy, Chicago Metropolis 2020 found that simple maintenance of the current transit system would provide a 21-percent return on investment (i.e., a \$1 investment would yield \$1.21 in saved jobs, new jobs, and time saved for commuters), while greater levels of funding could return up to 61 percent if the funding was tied to land use policies that encourage transit use. Essentially, the more money that is invested in the public transportation system, the greater the potential return on investment for the region. Much of this economic benefit is due to reduced congestion, because providing transit options improves travel even for people who continue to drive.

Using transit is also less expensive for an individual than owning and maintaining an automobile, and transit systems provide important travel options for lower-income residents. The annual cost of owning, maintaining, and commuting by car averages \$6,000 per year and is often much higher; in comparison, regular commuting on the CTA costs around \$1,000 per year with monthly passes.

Environmental Benefits

Transit creates environmental benefits by reducing emissions of pollutants and greenhouse gases, reducing oil and gasoline consumption, and shifting some petroleum usage to electricity. Transportation is one of the largest single sources of greenhouse gas emissions, and shifting from automobile to transit is often the action that a household can take to most dramatically reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. Public transportation uses about half as much fuel per passenger mile as private vehicles, and in addition to fuel savings accrued from shifting drivers to transit, there would be savings due to reduced congestion for those continuing to drive.

Community Benefits

Public transit can also have many positive impacts on nearby communities. Transit increases the value of nearby land, helping to support transit-oriented development or reinvestment projects. Particularly around rail stations, a number of economic studies have shown that land values nearby are higher than in comparable areas that are not near transit. It also supports non-motorized transportation systems, as most transit trips begin or end with walking or biking. Transit is a central component of livable communities, one of the main themes of *GO TO 2040*.

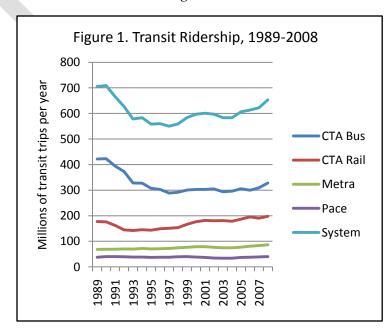
Current Conditions

The metropolitan Chicago region has one of the nation's oldest and most extensive public transportation systems. Service is provided by three operating agencies – the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) rapid transit and bus, Metra commuter rail, and Pace suburban bus and ADA paratransit – under the umbrella of the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA). Each has specific authorities and responsibilities:

- The Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) offers bus and heavy rail service within Chicago and 40 nearby communities. The CTA system is the second largest public transportation system in the country and provides 1.6 million rides on an average weekday.
- Metra provides commuter rail service throughout the region. Operating from four downtown Chicago transit stations, Metra serves 230 stations throughout the region and averages 300,000 rides per weekday.
- Pace offers bus service in the suburban parts of the region, as well as providing vanpool and ride matching (carpooling) information for the entire region. Pace also is responsible for demand-responsive paratransit service (vehicles dispatched on request) throughout the region including Chicago, including service required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Pace's bus service provides averages around 100,000 rides per weekday, with an additional 10,000 riders per day using paratransit.
- The three service providers are governed by the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) whose primary mission is to manage the financial aspects of the transit system and to facilitate coordination among the service providers. While CTA, Pace, and Metra are each responsible for setting their levels of service, fares, and operational policies, the RTA provides oversight of these decisions, particularly budgeting issues. Additionally, the RTA is responsible for decisions requiring a regional perspective, including coordination of transportation services across the three agencies.

Together, this system provides two million rides on an average weekday, accounting for nearly 6 percent of all trips and over 12 percent of commute trips. (Please note that Kendall County is in the CMAP region but not in the RTA service area.)

Use of the transit system has not kept pace with the region's growth. Overall ridership is lower than it was 20 years ago, though it has



rebounded substantially from a low point in the mid-1990s. Meanwhile, the region's population and employment have grown and become more dispersed, often in development patterns that were designed solely for the automobile and are therefore difficult to serve with transit.

Funding

Transit expenditures are often divided into two types, though the lines can be blurry; operating funds are those used to run the system, including staffing, fuel costs, and other ongoing costs, and capital funds are those used for major maintenance, improvement, or expansion projects.

Each year, more than \$2 billion is spent to operate the transit system. Approximately half of this is made up from fares collected from riders, termed "farebox recovery." This is supplemented by a portion of the sales tax collected in the region, applied at the rate of one-cent in Cook County and one-half-cent in the collar counties, and a real estate transfer tax applied only within Chicago. This funding is then allocated geographically, with funds collected in Chicago, suburban Cook County, and the collar counties being distributed to the service boards at varying rates (for example, Chicago's funds go entirely to the CTA, while the collar counties go to Metra and Pace). The state matches a portion of the sales tax collected in Cook County and also makes other contributions.

Transit capital funds generally come from state and federal sources. Unlike operations funding, which are fairly constant, transit capital revenue and expenses can vary significantly from year to year, depending on state bond issues and timing of major project construction. In addition to capital improvements, capital funds are also used for the purchase of buses and rail cars, which typically makes up a significant portion of the capital expense in any given year. A significant capital funding source is the federal New Starts program, but this is restricted only to capital expansions.

The RTA's 2007 *Moving Beyond Congestion* initiative highlighted the transit system's considerable capital and operating funding needs, caused by years of underinvestment. This initiative resulted in new operating funding from increases in the sales tax and allocation of Real Estate Transfer Tax. This averted the immediate crisis but did not fully solve the problem of sustainable funding, especially for the backlog of capital maintenance needs. It also did not halt the cost increases that have bedeviled the transit system. These problems are not unique to this region, as transit agencies in many other U.S. metropolitan areas face similarly increasing costs of health insurance, pension obligations, and construction.

Currently, tax revenues have fallen significantly due to the ongoing recession, while costs continue to rise. Severe service cuts were put in place in February 2010 to address this new reality. In this environment, even maintaining the current transit system — let alone expanding it to meet demands for service in underserved areas — is a critical challenge.

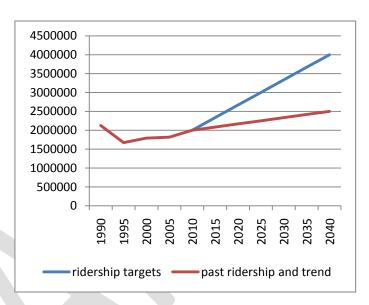
Measuring Success of Public Transit

CMAP proposes to measure the region's success in improving the transit system using two indicators: transit ridership and transit access. Transit ridership is defined as the number of trips served by transit on an average weekday. Transit access is defined as the number of people who live within walking distance of transit. Together, these two indicators measure both the effectiveness and the coverage of the region's transit system.

Transit Ridership

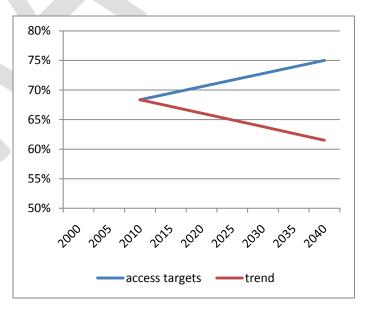
Ridership is a standard measure of the use of a transit system. Currently, weekday ridership on the region's transit system is approximately two million (ridership on weekends is considerably lower). This is approximately 9 percent of trips made each weekday. By 2040, the region should increase transit ridership's share to 13.5 percent of trips made each weekday – or approximately 4 million trips.

2040 target: 4 million2015 target: 2.3 million



Transit Access

Another measure of the region's transit system is the number of people who live within walking distance of transit. While this does not account for the quality of the transit service and also does not measure those who drive to transit stations, it does provide a simple measure of transit accessibility. Currently, 5.9 million people (68 percent of the region's population) live within walking distance of transit. By 2040, the region should increase the number who live within walking distance of transit to 8.25 million people (or 75 percent of the region's 11 million people in 2040). This



can be accomplished by encouraging development in areas with transit service, and also by expanding the transit network through new bus service to cover additional parts of the region.

2040 target: 75 percent2015 target: 69 percent

Recommendations

Dramatic improvements to the region's transit infrastructure and operations are needed to create a truly world-class system. Below, these improvements are broken into two categories: maintaining and modernizing the system; and pursuing major expansion projects, including high-speed rail. This section also makes recommendations for financing (which is also dealt with in the Costs and Financing section) and for supportive land use that is essential to the success of transit.

Maintaining and Modernizing

A top priority of *GO TO 2040* is to maintain and operate the existing transportation system, and transit is no exception. The region's transit infrastructure represents a \$36 billion investment,^v and protecting this investment is a high priority. The goal is to move the system toward a "state of good repair," the point at which all transit facilities are in good condition and there is no backlog of capital maintenance. For many years, the region has been moving in the wrong direction in relation to this goal; due to underinvestment in maintenance and implacably rising operation costs, funds that should have been used for capital investment have instead been diverted to keep the system operating. A state of good repair for all facilities may not be reached within the plan's horizon, but it is an ongoing goal that should be strived for.

Improving the condition of transit infrastructure is important, not only because it saves more costly repairs in future years, but because it improves transit operations. A better maintained system would reduce equipment breakdowns and remove "slow zones" (areas where conditions necessitate slower operating speeds than desired), allowing services to more closely adhere to their schedules and making more frequent service possible. Even beyond its practical benefits, a well-maintained system also projects a more positive image of the quality of service, making transit more appealing to potential users.

Maintenance can also serve as an opportunity to modernize, improve, and enhance the transit system at the same time. For example, rather than simply replacing buses or rail cars at the end of their useful lives with identical vehicles, transit agencies should seek to upgrade them. As another example, routine rehabilitation of stations can provide an opportunity to install real-time vehicle arrival signs. If paired with maintenance activities, these improvements can be accomplished at lower cost than if they were stand-alone projects.

Taken together, small-scale improvements can be very effective at improving the transit system. A variety of technological improvements, including real-time traveler information, transit signal priority, use of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), and flexible scheduling of demand-responsive service, can make transit easier to use and more efficient to operate. Many of these innovations have already been applied in the region and should continue to be expanded. As discussed earlier in this section, user perception of transit is critically important, and well-designed stations, modern vehicles, and even the inclusion of public art in transit facilities helps to improve the image of transit. A specific improvement that would help with both user perception and

experience is the integrated coordination of fares between the service boards, and the RTA should exercise its authority to require this improvement.

These improvements would make transit operate more smoothly and attract riders, but do not replace the basic need to have an adequate supply of service. The service cuts put in place in February 2010 eliminated a number of bus routes (both CTA and Pace) and reduced service frequencies on bus and rail. Restoring this service is a necessity but only a first step. Increases in frequency on existing bus services, particularly those that experience overcrowding, would help increase ridership, as some potential users turn to other modes to avoid crowded conditions.

Bus service should be expanded into underserved areas with high transit potential and where it is complemented by land use planning and local infrastructure investment that supports transit. Many suburban areas have densities that are high enough to support transit, either for all-day bus service or for shuttle services that focus specifically on connecting residents or workers to train stations or other destinations. When conventional bus service is not feasible in low-density areas, other transit options such as vanpools, employer-sponsored shuttles, or demandresponsive services may be. To make any new service as attractive to potential riders as possible, the technological improvements described above should be incorporated, and high-quality stations, appropriate vehicles, and supportive local infrastructure should all be included. In many cases, bus service can test the market for transit, helping to determine whether a major capital investment in infrastructure is justified.

Another important element of public transit is the region's paratransit system. The cost of providing paratransit is steep, and will only get more so as the senior population continues to grow. *GO TO 2040* recommends attracting as many paratransit users as possible to the fixed-route system, by way of the service increases and improvements to user perception described above. Many paratransit riders avoid fixed-route service because of concerns about their safety or the difficulty of making transfers, and the general transit improvements described earlier in this section will help to alleviate these concerns. Beyond this, it is clear that improving service beyond the basic requirements of the ADA will require contributions from local governments, nonprofits, or private groups (such as senior housing developments) in the areas covered.

Expansion

Maintenance and modernization is a priority, but some expansion of the system is also needed to match changing patterns of where people live and work. In general, CMAP supports expansions of the region's bus system, provided that these new projects are carefully prioritized and supported by local land use and infrastructure. In contrast, only a limited number of major capital expansions (such as new or extended rail lines) are recommended.

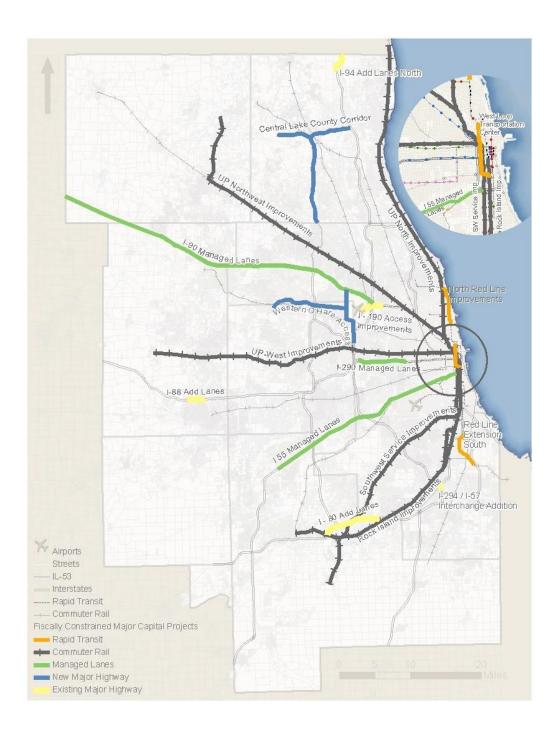
GO TO 2040, as the formal long-range transportation plan for the region, takes a special approach to major capital expansion, in compliance with federal guidelines in its treatment of major transportation capital projects. Essentially, the plan must include a list of major capital

projects that can be pursued with available or reasonably expected funding, termed "fiscal constraint." More details are available in Appendix X.

While major transit expansion projects generate a great deal of attention and interest, they are generally not the most effective or efficient ways to make improvements to the region's transit system. Maintenance, modernization, and strategic improvements are more effective, as they capitalize on existing infrastructure. But *GO TO* 2040 does recommend a limited number of major projects for implementation: the West Loop Transportation Center, Red Line South extension, north Red Line improvements, and improvements to the UP-W, UP-NW (including a short extension), UP-N, Southwest Service, and Rock Island rail lines. It also recommends pursuit of managed lanes, which may include Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) components, on I-90, I-290, and I-55. These projects are shown in the map on the following page. More details on each of these can be found in Appendix Y, which describes major capital projects.

These projects contain few extensions or new service; instead, they typically improve and expand the capacity of existing infrastructure. The north Red Line, UP-W, UP-N, Southwest Service, and Rock Island projects all improve existing rail lines, building on our existing capital investment; the UP-NW project includes a short extension but is primarily an improvement project as well. The Red Line South extension is the only significant extension project on the fiscally constrained project list. It extends service by providing an important new transit link for residents of a primarily low-income area, and studies have shown that the project will generate considerable ridership.

Finally, the West Loop Transportation Center is necessary for Chicago to become, as intended, the hub of a Midwest high-speed rail network, as it improves connections between proposed high-speed rail (and current interregional rail), Metra, and CTA. This project creates a multimodal transportation center in the West Loop, with direct pedestrian connections between Union and Ogilvie Stations and a new CTA rail branch. Beyond supporting high-speed rail, it is expected to provide significant immediate benefits to the many Metra lines terminating at Union Station, improves connections between Union and Ogilvie Stations, and eases transfers between Metra and CTA.



There are twenty-four major capital projects which were proposed but which are not on the constrained project list. Several of these exhibited significant benefits but are early in the project development process and require further study, or will need innovative financing to be feasible. More details on the treatment of all unconstrained projects, and specific recommendations concerning them, can be found in Appendix Y.

The plan also supports interregional high-speed rail, which is planned to provide connections to other Midwestern metropolitan areas. It is important for high-speed rail investments not to be viewed as a replacement for investments in the region's transit system. Continued pursuit of new high-speed rail service is recommended, but new revenue should be found for this investment, rather than diverting the region's scarce transportation resources for this purpose. Local transit connections and supportive land use planning around proposed stations – including the West Loop Transportation Center, as well as any stations located in suburban areas – would strengthen high-speed rail and should be pursued. *GO TO 2040* also supports the continuation of traditional inter-city rail service such as that currently provided by Amtrak.

Finance

Few or none of the improvements described above are possible within the current financial environment. Financial analysis of expected transportation revenues and costs through 2040 has shown that existing revenue sources are barely sufficient to maintain our transportation system, even assuming that future increases in cost are quite modest. To solve the financial problems of the transit system, cost increases must be kept in check, and additional revenue sources must be found.

Both of these efforts should be the primary focus of the RTA, which is responsible for the financial oversight of the system. *GO TO 2040* recommends a strong, central role for the RTA in understanding and solving the financial challenges facing the system. This will necessitate working closely with the transit service boards to control costs, while exploring a variety of funding sources for transit. As a starting point, these should include the state meeting its transit funding obligations and the use of new congestion pricing revenues for nearby transit options. Further options include the pricing of parking, tapping into sources traditionally reserved for highway use such as gas tax funds, or investigating public-private partnerships or other innovative sources. In the past, the transit system has relied on occasional state capital bills to meet its needs, but these have been infrequent and unpredictable and have often been earmarked, instead of funding the most beneficial projects. Instead, transit (and transportation overall) should be adequately funded on a regular basis, which would remove the need to have periodic capital infusions. Finally, CMAP recommends reforms in federal funding programs that currently favor new service startups instead of maintenance (specifically, the New Starts program).

Rough estimates of costs for the improvements described above are contained on page 21.

Supportive Land Use

For transit to be successful, it requires supportive land use planning and infrastructure investments. A new transit service in an area that is low density and not walkable is unlikely to succeed. Therefore, transit expansion efforts should be accompanied by land use planning and local infrastructure investments that seek to create a transit-friendly environment, and transit investments should be prioritized in places where such planning is occurring. This section of the *GO TO 2040* plan deliberately avoids using the term "transit-oriented development" (TOD).

CMAP supports TOD, but the term is often interpreted to include only the area directly around train stations. This overly limits discussions of transit-supportive land use, which is important to support bus service as well as rail.

The description of features of livable communities contained on page X covers many of the elements that make up transit-supportive land use. Some elements are particularly important, such as development density. Rules of thumb among transit researchers are that 6-8 housing units per acre (or 25 employees per acre) are needed to support basic bus service, and more than twice this density is needed for more frequent bus or rail service, though this can vary. Provision of affordable housing in areas served by transit is also particularly important, because transit is often the only travel option for lower-income residents. One important precondition for successful transit service is an extensive pedestrian infrastructure that makes direct connections from transit stops to nearby destinations and provides safe ways to cross busy streets. Other infrastructure improvements can be made locally to support transit, such as bicycle racks at train stations and bus stops, attractive bus shelters, and improvements that allow accessibility by disabled people.

Parking deserves particular attention in this discussion because of its complex relationship with transit. Free and easily available parking is the norm in most parts of the region, even though the construction and maintenance of a parking space is far from free. In other words, free parking is actually subsidized by the local governments or businesses that provide it. It also creates a disincentive to use transit; ridership is typically highest when traveling to destinations where parking is expensive or scarce. One important transit-supportive action that local governments can take is to review parking regulations and pricing levels to examine what kinds of travel behavior they incentivize. On the other hand, parking can also help provide access to transit. While the *GO TO 2040* plan supports dense development around train stations (conventional TOD), many of the region's Metra stations that attract the most riders have significant commuter parking. CMAP recommends an ongoing mixture of stations that focus on TOD and stations that provide commuter parking options, though the overall intent should be to transition stations to TOD where possible.

Despite the importance of local planning to support transit, most municipal comprehensive plans do not include detailed recommendations on the topic. Nearly every community in the region -- even those without train stations -- includes areas that could support some type of transit service. Most of these communities also support the improvement or expansion of transit within their community, recognizing its value to their residents. *GO TO 2040* recommends that local governments interested in attracting transit should plan for supportive land use and infrastructure improvements to support it, and that the region's transit agencies should consider the degree of supportive local planning when making investment decisions.

These planning activities should be supported by funding and financial incentives for local governments who plan for land use that supports transit. *GO TO 2040* recommends creating a single, streamlined program funding program to support local planning and ordinance updates,

with funding from CMAP (from UWP funds), RTA, and IDOT. The combined program should fund planning efforts that link transportation, land use, housing, and economic development. This program should focus on regulatory and policy changes that implement plans, rather than on planning for its own sake. For example, many plans recommend changes to zoning ordinances or parking regulations, but funding is rarely available for these regulatory changes; this program should fund them.

Federal programs may also provide new funding sources for planning and implementation. One new federal program, the Sustainable Communities Initiative, appears to provide initial steps in this direction, and the U.S. government should commit sufficient funds to this or similar programs to support plan development and implementation. Opportunities for tying implementation funds to planning can even be pursued without new funding sources. Recognizing the interplay between infrastructure investments and land use, the region should use transportation funding strategically to support projects that help to implement *GO TO 2040*. Two examples from other regions, the Atlanta Regional Commission's Livable Communities Initiative (LCI) and the San Francisco Bay Area Metropolitan Transportation Commission's Transportation for Livable Communities (TLC) program, use a combination of state and federal funds for this purpose, and a similar program should be created in this region.

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Implementation area #1: Improve the fiscal health of transit

Action	Implementers	Specifics
Focus RTA efforts on	RTA	The RTA is charged with the financial oversight of
financial oversight		the transit system. The recent funding crisis has
		highlighted the importance of this responsibility. In
		collaboration with the service boards, the RTA
		should focus its efforts on addressing the system's
		fiscal health, including increasing efficiencies and
		ending the continual cost increases that have
		compromised the integrity of the system.
Direct a portion of	IDOT, ISTHA, local	Congestion pricing and parking pricing are
congestion/parking	governments	recommended within GO TO 2040. The revenues
pricing revenues to		from these sources should be used in part for
transit		supportive transit service. For example, revenues
		from congestion pricing should be used to support
		increased transit service in the same corridor as the
		priced facility.
Use other innovative	USDOT, IDOT,	The reliance of the transit system on sales tax has
funding sources	CMAP	contributed to its current funding crisis. CMAP, in
		conjunction with potential funding partners, should
		investigate innovative financing such as value
		capture, or allocating a portion of motor fuel tax
		receipts to transit, in addition to the pricing strategies
		described above.
Reform the federal New	USDOT	Change the criteria for federal New Starts grants,
Starts process		which are a significant funding source for transit, to
		support reinvestment in existing infrastructure rather
		than solely new expansions.

Implementation area #2: Modernize the region's transit system

Action	Implementers	Specifics
Focus investments on	RTA, CTA, Metra,	Continue to make the maintenance of the system at a
maintenance and	Pace	safe and adequate level the top priority when making
modernization		investment decisions. The transit service boards
		should also pursue opportunities to modernize and
		upgrade the system as part of routine maintenance to
		bring the system to a world-class level.
Adopt best practices in	RTA, CTA, Metra,	Use technological improvements to make the system
new technologies	Pace	more efficient. The use of transit signal priority
		system, Arterial Rapid Transit (ART) concepts, and
		traffic signal coordination in general are supported,
		particularly when integrated multimodally to form
		"smart corridors." Advanced scheduling and
		operations practices should also be used to improve
		the efficiency of demand-responsive services.
Widely implement	RTA, CTA, Metra,	Pursue the widespread implementation of traveler
traveler information	Pace	information systems, which can give real-time arrival
systems		information, assist in trip planning, inform
		commuters about parking availability, and serve
		other purposes.
Consider user	RTA, CTA, Metra,	Invest in improvements that make transit more
perception in vehicle	Pace	attractive to potential users. State-of-the-art vehicles,
purchases, and station		clean and attractive stations, inclusion of public art of
design		other aesthetic features, and the overall appearance
		of transit has an impact on its use.
Establish seamless	RTA, CTA, Metra,	Coordinate services and fares between the service
coordination between	Pace	boards, including pursuit of a Universal Fare Card.
modes		Also, coordination with bicycle and pedestrian
		facilities and car-sharing services, which are often
		used by transit riders, can link transit seamlessly
		with other modes.

Implementation area #3: Pursue priority projects

Action	Implementers	Specifics
Prioritize among	RTA, CTA, Metra,	Pursue bus expansion projects in areas where they are
potential service	Pace	most likely to succeed. Expansions should be
increases, extensions,		prioritized in part based on supportive local land use
and new service using		planning and infrastructure investment. The
regionally consistent		recommendations made above concerning technology
criteria		and user perception apply here as well. Potential transit
C11001101		markets should be tested with bus-based concepts such
		as ART or BRT before investing in rail infrastructure.
Include BRT components	IDOT, ISTHA,	Include planning for BRT within highway projects
as part of major highway	Pace	recommended in the plan, including the Elgin-O'Hare
capital projects		projects, I-290 managed lane, I-55 managed lane, I-90
		managed lane, and the Central Lake County corridor.
Implement priority	CDOT, CTA,	Advance recommended projects through the federal
transit projects	Metra	New Starts program or other discretionary funding
r - F - J		programs. Highest priority projects for immediate
		action include the Red Line South extension, West Loop
		Transportation Center, and improvements to the north
		Red Line, Union Pacific (N, NW, and W), Rock Island
		line, and Southwest Service.
Conduct detailed studies	CDOT, CTA,	Conduct feasibility studies for projects that showed high
of prioritized corridors,	Metra, Pace	potential but are not fully understood, and pursue
and continually develop		innovative financing for beneficial unconstrained
and evaluate major		projects. Identify potential major capital projects
projects		through corridor studies, county or COG transportation
1)		plans, or other regional efforts. Evaluate and consider
		these projects during regular updates to the plan.
Improve evaluation	CMAP, RTA	In light of limited funding, it is critically important to be
measures and decision-		able to evaluate projects against a variety of evaluation
making processes		measures to make the best long-term decisions. CMAP
		should work with the RTA to develop improved
		transportation models that effectively measure the
		benefits of a variety of types of transit projects.
Increase federal	USDOT, Congress	The initial round of funding for high-speed rail assisted
investment in high-		with necessary improvements, but considerably more is
speed rail		needed to actually implement a functioning system. A
		continued federal commitment is necessary for this. The
		region's Congressional representatives should make this
		a high priority, as should USDOT staff.
Link high-speed rail	CDOT, Metra,	Advance the West Loop Transportation Center, which
with regional transit and	local governments	improves the connections between Metra and the CTA,
land use planning		as well as proposed high-speed rail service, and plan for
		supportive nearby land use. Plan for direct and
		convenient links between high-speed rail, Metra, and
		CTA in this location. Also, identify additional station

	locations within the region and plan for supporting
	transit services and land use.



Implementation area #4: Conduct supportive land use planning

Action	Implementers	Specifics
Plan for land use	Local	Prepare land use plans around stations of the Red Line
specifically around major	governments	South extension, West Loop Transportation Center, and
transit capital projects		improvements to the north Red Line, Union Pacific (N,
		NW, and W), Rock Island line, and Southwest Service.
Plan for land use	Local	Study the best way to conduct land use planning to
specifically around BRT	governments	support BRT services which may be part of the Elgin-
projects		O'Hare projects, I-290 managed lane, I-55 managed
		lane, I-90 managed lane, and the Central Lake County
		corridor. There are not good regional examples of how
		land use planning around expressway-based BRTs
		could occur, and a framework for this is needed.
Plan for land use around	Local	Prepare plans and amend ordinances to support
areas where expansion is	governments	transit-supportive land use in areas where bus-based
expected		service extensions are expected.
Require supportive land	CTA, Metra, Pace	Consider supportive land use when making investment
use planning before new		and programming decisions. The service boards
transit investment is made		should prioritize investments (new service in
		particular) in areas that have or are planning for land
		use and local infrastructure that supports transit.
Update guidelines for	RTA, CTA,	Update materials produced by the transit service
transit-supportive land use	Metra, Pace	boards concerning land use planning and small-scale
		infrastructure investments that support transit. These
		materials should include additional topics such as
		housing affordability that go beyond the density and
		design issues which are currently included.
Align funding for	CMAP, IDOT,	CMAP, IDOT, and RTA should create a combined
planning and ordinance	RTA, local	funding pool (using UWP, SPR, and CSPP,
updates	governments	respectively) to fund local plans and ordinance
		updates. Use funds to create new streamlined grant
		program for transportation, land use, and housing
		which assists local governments to create plans or
		ordinance updates that are consistent with GO TO
		2040. This program should be focused on addressing
		elements beyond plan preparation including ordinance
		changes, updates to municipal programs or policies, or
		similar activities. Supplement these funding sources
		with philanthropic or other public and private sources
		as appropriate.
Identify and exploit	CMAP, CNT,	Many communities have embraced TOD as a strategy
additional opportunities	MPC, RTA	to revitalize their downtowns, and plans for many of
for TOD		the most obvious locations for TOD have already been
		prepared. CMAP and other regional organizations
		should identify other potential opportunities for
		application of TOD strategies and initiate pilot TOD

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		projects in areas where TOD is more difficult (i.e.
		locations with difficult land assembly, bus-based TOD,
		etc).
Permit mixed-use, higher	Local	Municipalities should pursue opportunities for more
density development near	governments	dense development which mixes uses and housing
transit		types within "location efficient" areas near transit
		services. Municipalities can increase density by
		providing density bonuses (in exchange for affordable
		units), creating transit overlay districts, or using form-
		based codes.
Promote housing	Local	Proximity to transit services often increases land value,
affordability near transit	governments	making it more difficult to provide a range of housing.
		Municipalities can provide a variety of incentives to
		developers to bring down development costs in
		exchange for affordable units. These tools include land
		donations, density bonuses, permit fee waivers, land
		trusts and expedited permitting processes. These
		should be explored, considered, and adapted to specific
		local situations.
Target housing programs	HUD, IHDA,	Affordable housing grant programs should give
to rehabilitation in areas	lenders, local	priority to preserving the existing affordable housing
with transit access	governments	stock, particularly in TODs.

Costs and Financing

A detailed transportation financial plan has been prepared as part of *GO TO 2040* and is available as Appendix X. The following summarizes elements of the transportation financial plan that relate to public transit. Within this section, the terms "fiscally constrained" and "fiscally unconstrained" are used. All figures in this section are in year of expenditure dollars, meaning that inflation has already been added.

The transportation financial plan concluded that \$385 billion was expected to be available in transportation revenues within the *GO TO 2040* plan's time horizon. Projects or recommendations that are "fiscally constrained" are those that can be funded within this \$385 billion figure. Projects or recommendations that are "fiscally unconstrained" may be desirable and beneficial but would require additional revenue. The recommendations for public transit improvements include both types. In other words, some but not all of the transit recommendations can be funded within expected revenues; others will require new sources of revenue to be identified.

This recommendation area calls for the region to invest in maintaining and modernizing the transit system; making strategic improvements and enhancements; and pursuing a limited number of major expansion projects. High-level cost estimates for these activities are provided below.

Cost Categories

Maintaining and modernizing the existing system is a top priority of *GO TO 2040*. The maintenance of the system at a level that is safe and adequate – a fundamental precondition – must funded in full before any other improvements are made, and *GO TO 2040* dedicates significant funding for this purpose. The cost of basic system maintenance and operations is estimated at approximately \$150 billion, and this is fully funded within the plan.

Beyond basic maintenance, the modernization, enhancement, and improvement of the system are high priorities. Of the recommended project types described above in this category – including technological improvements, service frequency increases, and new bus service – some but not all can be funded within expected revenues. Approximately \$55 billion in needs have been identified for projects in this category, but only \$15 billion to \$25 billion in funding is currently expected to be available for them. Additional revenue or savings through cost reductions will be necessary to fund the remainder of these improvements.

Finally, a limited number of major transit expansion projects are necessary to improve the transit system. Approximately \$30 billion in new capital proposals were identified through *GO TO 2040*, and these were individually reviewed and prioritized. Eight projects totaling \$6 billion in new capital costs are fiscally constrained, including the Red Line South extension, West Loop Transportation Center, and improvements to the north Red Line, Union Pacific (N, NW, and W), Rock Island line, and Southwest Service. The remaining proposals require additional revenue to be able to pursue.

Additional Financing

As the above descriptions and table indicate, significant new funding is necessary to make all of the proposed transit improvements. Similar shortfalls exist in other areas of the transportation system as well. The "transportation finance" recommendation contains more analysis and specific recommendations for potential funding sources to fill this gap.

Of particular note for transit, *GO TO 2040* recommends pursuing congestion pricing in appropriate corridors and dedicating a portion of the revenues to operate transit service in the same corridors. A modest approach to congestion pricing was included within the fiscally constrained revenues; a more aggressive approach would generate more revenue, which could be used for transit purposes. Another relatively unexplored option which has tremendous revenue generation potential is parking pricing, and the application of this, especially in areas where new transit service is being planned, is a recommendation of *GO TO 2040*. Finally, *GO TO 2040* recommends further investigation of innovative financing options such as public-private partnerships, or "value capture," which allows the transit agency to share in the property value increases that new or improved transit services create in nearby areas.

More detailed descriptions of these financing options are contained in the "transportation finance" recommendation and in the full transportation financial plan, Appendix X of the *GO TO 2040* plan.

¹ Chicago Metropolis 2020. 2007b. *Time is Money: The Economic Benefits of Transit Investment*. Chicago Metropolis 2020.

¹¹ Davis, Todd and Monica Hale. 2007. Public Transportation's Contribution to U.S. Greenhouse Gas Reduction. SAIC.

iii Shapiro, Robert J., Kevin A. Hassett, and Frank S. Arnold. 2002. *Conserving Energy and Preserving the Environment: The Role of Public Transportation*. American Public Transportation.

iv McMillen, Daniel P. and John McDonald. 2004. —Reaction of House Prices to a New Rapid Transit Line: Chicago's Midway Line, 1983 – 1999. || *Real Estate Economics*, 32, 3: 463 – 486; McDonald, John F. and Clifford I. Ousji. 1995. —The effect of anticipated transportation improvement on residential land values. || *Regional Science and Urban Economics*, 25: 261-278; Bowes, David R. and Keith R. Ihlanfeldt. 2001. —Identifying the Impacts of Rail Transit Stations on Residential Property Values. || *Journal of Urban Economics*, 50: 1 – 25; Cervero, Robert and Michael Duncan. 2002. —Transit's Value-Added Effects: Light and Commuter Rail Services and Commercial Land Values. || Transportation Research Record 1805: 8 – 15.

v RTA, Moving Beyond Congestion